BOSTON
New & Old

By

T. Russell Sullivan

With Illustrations by

Lester G. Hornby

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Boston New and Old

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BY T. R. SULLIVAN

DRAWINGS BY

LESTER G. HORNBY

BOSTON AND NEW YORK

HOUGHTON MIFFLIN COMPANY

MDCCCCXII

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Contents

I. At Thiodon's 1

II. Trimountain 9

III. Time's Inflictions 29

IV. Time's Amendments 51

V. Dwellers on the Hill . . . 71

VI. The Soul of the City . . . 89

Illustrations

On the Esplanade i

The Charles River Esplanade (*Colored*) *Frontispiece*

Spring Morning on the Common . . . v

The Charlesgate from the Fenway . . vii

Golf in Franklin Park ix

The Old "Bell-in-Hand," Pie Alley . . 1

Old King's Chapel and the Parker House, Tremont Street 6

Tremont Street from Lafayette Mall . . 9

Illustrations

Fishing Boat at Old T Wharf . . . 16

Commercial Street from the Custom House . 18

Rainy Day at Quincy Market. The flower stand 20

Old Church on Charles Street . . . 26

The Old Revere House, Bowdoin Square . 28

The Navy Yard from East Boston . . 29

In Central Square, East Boston . . . 32

State Street, and the Old State House . 34

Washington Street from top of "Globe" Building 36

City Hall from the Roof-tops 38

Old Buildings in North Square . . . 40

Park Street Church from Lafayette Mall . 44

Bridge in the Public Garden . . . 51

In the Public Garden 54

Path in the Fenway 58

New Old South Church, Copley Square . . 60

Christian Science Temple from the Fenway 62

The Esplanade, Harvard Medical School . 64

Old House on Beacon Street . . . 71

Illustrations

Dartmouth Street, corner of Commonwealth Avenue 74

The State House, Looking up Park Street . 78

In Louisburg Square. House where Jenny Lind was married 80

In Old Mount Vernon Street 82

Boylston Street from Charles Street . . 89

The Somerset from across the Fenway . . 109

A Pinckney Street Doorway 111

At Thiodon's

BOSTON

New and Old

I

AT THIODON'S

ALL times when old are good!" as the proverb says; and at one good time in Boston, more than fifty years ago, there came to the Howard Athenæum, which then was devoted chiefly to performance of classic drama, popularly described as "the legitimate," a so-called "Diorama of Dissolving Views." The exhibition was introduced merely to tide over some short interval between important engagements, but its promise piqued curiosity, especially among younger theatre-goers. All, young and old alike, were thrice-familiar with the panorama, that

obsolete form of entertainment, comprising a sequence of huge, scenic paintings, miles in length, which slowly unrolled — not without occasional hitching — behind the footlights, under the pointer of a showman who described them. There were panoramas of the Mississippi River, of Niagara and the Great Lakes, of Switzerland, of Paris, of the American Revolution. They are all rolled up now and forgotten, superseded by the cinematograph of vivid realism. In its descriptive title the Diorama pledged something more than painted canvas, something strange and new; and amply, when this one came, did it fulfil the pledge. Viewed through a wide, dark frame under the sunshine and shadow of reflected and transmitted light, brilliant landscape melted into architecture, that into vast wastes of desert, which became in turn radiantly fertile, blooming like the rose.

Aiding the illusion, there passed from time to time across these varying scenes cunningly devised mechanical figures, — laboring camels, prancing cavaliers, peasants and pack-horses and marching troops, — marvellously to shift one into another with their backgrounds; to dissolve, according to Prospero's and the new magician's word. He, magician, manager, and proprietor, was a Frenchman, — then, they did all these things best in France, — by name, Thiodon, which soon turned into a part of daily speech. The official designation of his magic product was far too cumbersome for general use. All said: "Let us go to Thiodon's!"

To one looking backward down the vista of the past, heightened in its charm by the present's wider margin, Boston rises up in a long series of dissolving views, akin to the Frenchman's, vague, clear, illusory,

vanishing altogether and unexpectedly reappearing. Before proceeding to consider our own day's passing phases in the admirable group of drawings by which these pages are suggested, let us pause here for a brief glance, through deepening shadows, at the Boston of sixty years ago, with its tinges clearer then than now of revolutionary and colonial times. The door is open; the glamour of the place invites us. Step for a few moments into Thiodon's.

Deserts we shall see, surely, for we manufactured them, ourselves; and "dumps," doleful enough; architecture, Heaven save the mark! and roses heaped on roses! Why, over in New York, they say that all theirs come from Boston. Camels, possibly, if it be circus-time; peasants, probably, of all nationalities; since in a dreadful book, the other day, we chanced to

BRIDE ST

read that all America is soon to be made up of Finns and Huns and Polish Jews, and that Boston is already a Roman Catholic city. Remembering past terrors of "yellow peril," we, for two, will not believe it; any more than we will believe that Harvard Crimson has turned in a single night to Cardinal Red!

Here is the box-office! Twelve and a half cents it used to be, or two tickets for a quarter. What! are times so altered? Take, O showman, thrice thy fee! but let us pass, to see the machine work, and draw our own conclusions.

Just one word of warning. Let us not be portentous! Boston has been said to take itself *sometimes* too seriously. And let us not prognosticate more than we can help, being human. Patrick Henry had but one lamp to guide his feet, — the lamp of experience. You may "lay to

that," with long John Silver. We, for two, are not alarmists. Cheerfully, then, for the fun of it, hand in hand, let us go in!

Trimountain

II

TRIMOUNTAIN

SOME years since, before the cars were removed from Tremont Street, seated in one of them, two good Bostonians fell into amicable dispute over pronunciation of the name. One called it "Trem-ont"; "Tre-mont," the other, accenting the second syllable. Failing to agree, they appealed to the conductor, who advanced in pursuit of his fares. Recognizing them as citizens, he answered at first only with a puzzled look. Then urged to speak, he said, indignantly, "Why, Tree-mont Street, of course!" and passed on. The problem, thus, was left unsolved; and a similar doubt used to hang over the origin of the civic sub-title, "Trimountain," which once recurred frequently in cur-

rent speech, but now is seldom heard except in the garbled form borne by the thoroughfare above mentioned.

A word of digression, here, about these same street-cars of ours! They have the enviable reputation of being trimmer and neater than most. The conductors, too, however tried by idle questions, have better manners than some we know of, and they are masterful in the matter of English. Their vehicles have but two doors; and none, worn and harried though he might be, was ever known to call out at the terminus, "Leave by the nearest door!" He always says "the nearer" one.

There comes to us from New York an amusing, well-authenticated tale of a conductor there who goaded forward a stately, high-souled dame by his coarse shout of "Step lively, lady!" She, more than equal to the occasion, with a scathing look re-

plied, "I have no wish to linger," and swept him by. It is safe to say that such a scene would be impossible in Boston; for our conductors, as a rule, are self-respecting and respectful, of good, if not high behavior. Odd characters are to be found among them; like the one long in charge of the little green car in Marlborough Street,—the last of all the horse-cars. He used in transit to help the school-children with their lessons, and, once, overhearing a wonder as to the identity of a passenger who had just alighted, remarked, "Why, don't you know? That 's Mrs. So-and-So! I 've handled her for years!" Poor man! He came to a violent end in an accident, and the whole Back Bay still misses that friendly, considerate soul.

Well, as we were saying, the derivation of our Trimountain name seemed doubtful. The boys often discussed the ques-

tion. Three hills, certainly, there were, and more; but, for the commemorative three, Beacon Hill, Copp's Hill, and Fort Hill stood most in evidence, until the last, with its brick dwelling-houses between Pearl Street and the sea, was obliterated by the march of commerce. The face of nature, elsewhere, is completely changed; yet we are assured that the name, "Trimountain," really sprang from three small summits of the long ridge running southwest through the centre of the peninsula. Copley's Hill, or Mount Vernon, was the farthest inland; Beacon Hill, the highest, shorn away for the foundations of the State House, rose in the centre, and to form its northeastern slope, the third peak, Cotton Hill, near the site of Pemberton Square, was graded out of existence. So that, from the harbor approach, the three hills, merged in one, stood out against the

western sky as figured upon the city seal, crowned by the State House dome with its flanking spires.

Close at hand, on Noddle's Island, the varied industries of East Boston thronged at the sea-level, while above them stretched away its newly settled placid streets and squares. Opposite, on the edge of Charlestown, the shipbuilding arks of the Navy Yard were conspicuous from their gigantic size. Everywhere along the city waterfront the sea made in irregularly.

The Long Wharf was really long, with no encumbering sheds or landing-stages. Over its whole length one looked from State Street, past the wooden sea-captain and his quadrant, — the work of good Shem Drowne, — out into the harbor. Behind it nestled old T Wharf, then, as now, the crowded haunt of fishermen.

On the other hand lay Central Wharf,

and India Wharf beyond it, — these two distinguished by their well-proportioned blocks of brick warehouses, built early in the century. Here, at Commercial Wharf, too, and Lewis Wharf, came in the merchantmen. The lofts and ground-floors of the buildings were stored with products of the Indies; midway, sunny counting-rooms overlooked the water, the loading and discharging vessels. There, where the merchants spent their days, the wide, comfortable spaces fitted with time-honored furniture, with paintings of clipper ships upon the walls, had a look of well-ordered repose, and, between cargoes, were, indeed, at times so quiet that the gentle lap of the harbor-waves could be heard against the wooden piers below. There was always a fragrance of mingled spices in the air which tranquil dignity pervaded. They had their rough-and-tumble days,

to be sure, when bags of ginger, cases of nutmegs, and flat bales of dusty palm-leaf swung up from the hold so fast that the tally-clerks lost count, confusion reigned, and tempers went by the board. The troops of small boys, who came collecting foreign postage-stamps and the decorative shipping-cards of elaborate design which were in vogue, must have been a pestering nuisance, yet were civilly endured. Only a few ill-natured consignees hung out signs warning off these youthful mendicants.

Up from the Long Wharf a little way, at the foot of State Street, stood the new Custom House with its colossal Doric porticos sombrely grandiose in style, yet, in reality, far less impressive than the graceful brick façade of the Old State House at the street's upper end; though, enamoured of costly modern construction

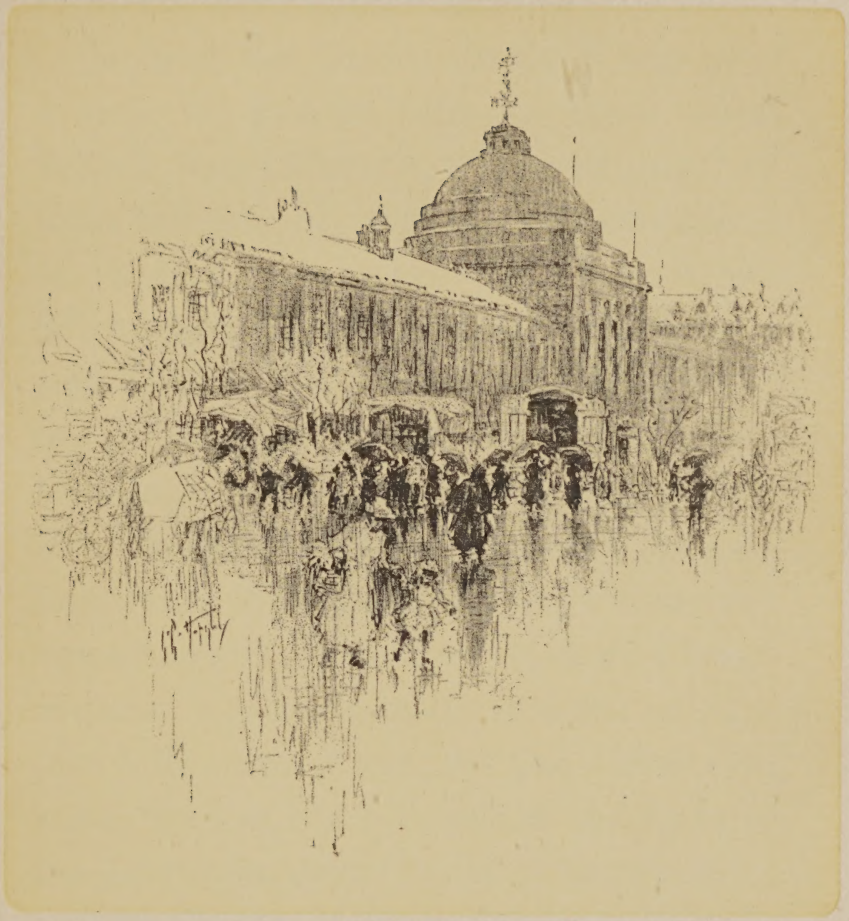
in granite and marble, most of us would have disputed that obvious fact. The broad pavement of Commercial Street, improved and widened, opened to the right from the northern front of the Receipt of Customs, and by following it a short distance one came to another Doric portico, the eastern end of Quincy Market. All our public buildings of the early nineteenth century had a dash of Greek in them; and this one, triumphantly set up by Mayor Quincy in 1825 after bitter opposition, had long been accepted and approved as a wise extension of the market-stalls huddled in and around Faneuil Hall, which uplifts its high-pitched colonial roof and grasshopper vane — another work of Deacon Drowne — close by; yet, even as late as 1860, certain rebellious old-timers stubbornly refused to honor Quincy's expedient with his name, calling it Faneuil Hall

Market — "Funnel," as pronounced by them — to the last gasp. On festal occasions the upper rooms of the Quincy structure were connected with Faneuil Hall by a wooden bridge over the intervening street, and the two buildings thus linked together served as one for exhibition purposes. The malcontents might have made this an excuse — though a poor one — to ignore their foremost citizen, not Mayor alone but President of Harvard College, whose statue, twenty years later, was placed in front of City Hall as an example for all time.

It is not far from Quincy Market to the very heart of the North End, where were clustered many early wooden dwellings given over to shops and tenements of the poorer classes swarming in the narrow ways. Toward the end of winding Salem Street, in the precincts of Christ Church, — the

North Church of Paul Revere's lanterns,—the peace of the olden time seemed suddenly restored. Hull Street, leading from the church door over Copp's Hill, was an undisturbed bit of the remote past that bordered in sedate finality the colonial burial-ground which slopes away from it toward the river mouth and Charlestown on the farther shore.

The descent of steep Snow Hill Street, solemn, unfrequented, led back into the bustling crowds of petty traffic. Thence, guided by forgotten landmarks through crooked lanes and short cuts, one finally emerged at the Boston Stone, built into the wall of a house in Marshall Street. It bears the date of 1737, and its precise significance is uncertain; but it seems to be the American counterpart of that London Stone, similarly walled into Saint Swithin's Church near Saint Paul's, from



which, according to tradition, distances formerly were reckoned.

Beyond the Boston Stone it was only a step to Brattle Square. Here stood Brattle Street Church, with a cannon-ball from the patriot camp of 1776 embedded in its front, near the spot where it had fallen. Just above this point, where once rose Cotton Hill, North and West Ends met. The ugly excrescence of Scollay's Buildings intervened; but drawn apart from that disturbing feature were the uniform house-fronts surrounding Pemberton Square, which opened up its short though intricate approach to the summit of Beacon Hill. And there, on the other side, at the foot of the hill, below the trees of the Common, came in the water again.

The Boston of those days was like the world in the primary geographies,— one part land and three parts water. From

the Back Bay, which originally encroached upon the Common, only the Public Garden and Charles Street had been reclaimed. They formed the irregular shore line. The site of Arlington Street was a muddy attempt at a beach; and southwestward, toward the Roxbury and Brookline hills, stretched off the Bay's watery expanse across which from the foot of Beacon Street, at the corner of the Garden, ran the straight causeway of the Mill-Dam with its double line of gray poplar trees, distorted by the prevalent wind. Midway upon it, a mile out, stood a low, wooden ropewalk. Ruined mills were isolated in the shallow water on the southern side; farther to the south crossed intersecting lines of railway bridges. Beyond them came more water, vague infinity and Boston Neck, — the original narrow isthmus of the peninsula, much widened on both

the bay and harbor sides, connected, too, by bridges with the promontory of Dorchester Neck, renamed South Boston.

Washington Street, with an omnibus-line to Roxbury, had once been the only thoroughfare on Boston Neck; but though parallel streets ran out all the way over the newer land it was still called the "Neck" then and long afterwards. Pleasant squares opened on either hand their ornamental grounds upon which blocks of comfortable houses looked down; and strenuous efforts were made to bring the modern quarter into favor. One stately dwelling, recalling within an eighteenth-century chateau, was built upon the old Neck itself in a walled garden. It began to look as if the fashionable current had set that way. Then, suddenly, the new impetus was checked. Preferment of the Neck and the neighboring territory wa-

vered, declined into disfavor. Fashion, defiant of natural obstacles, obedient to its own mysterious law, at a bound went westward, as in London, Paris, and many other expanding cities, native and foreign.

The favored quarter at the close of what may be called the Trimountain epoch abutted upon the Common and included the streets leading directly thither, as well as many of those adjoining. Beacon Street, with the old stone Hancock house terraced high above the mall; Park Street, with its ample frontages; Tremont Street, where the group of houses known as "Colonnade Row" carried their line of Tuscan porticos from West to Mason Street; all these had the character, distinction, and serenity of earlier days. So had Hamilton Place, and Winter Street. Summer Street, once a street of gardens, of fine English elms

and horse-chestnuts, led to Church Green, —approached on the other side by West and Bedford Streets, — taking its name from the New South Church, a much admired work of Bulfinch. Beyond that bulwark, Pearl Street and Fort Hill had gone the way of business; but, defended by Church Green, Otis Place and Winthrop Place still held their own; Chauncy Street, too, Rowe Place and Essex Street, — all were traditional. Franklin Place was turning into Franklin Street; though Bulfinch's crescent of Tontine Buildings survived, together with his classic urn, inscribed to Franklin, in the central grass-plot. This memorial now marks the architect's grave at Mount Auburn.

Temple Place was the nominal centre of the inhabited region below the Common. Its handsome houses shut out Washington Street at a higher level; but a

flight of steps led down through a narrow court to the shops of the main artery between Dock Square and the Neck, which were easily accessible yet no disturbance. Its retirement represented the city's aristocratic pole as opposed to the plebeian one, — thus typically introduced by Holmes into his poem of that day and generation: —

> "And, when I left, Society
> Had burst its ancient guards,
> And Brattle Street and Temple Place
> Were interchanging cards!"

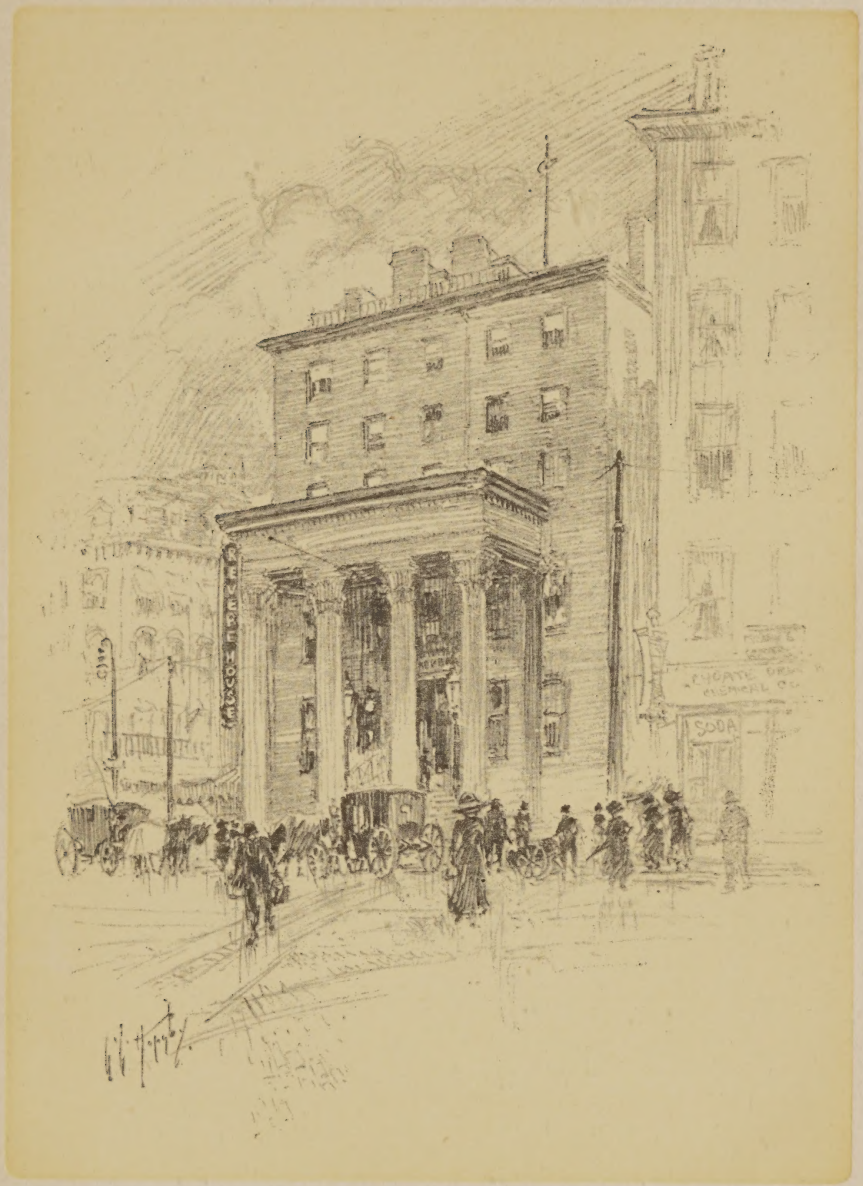
On the upper side of the Common, over Beacon Hill, the lines of excellence swerved capriciously. The stables, stone-yards, and foundries along the rough river-shore were crowded out one by one, to make Charles Street under its linden trees pleasantly unpretentious, peaceful, and habitable. Brimmer Street did

not exist. There was much vacant land on the water side, giving river prospect even to the houses of the inner one. Some of these were covered with climbing roses, sweet-brier, and honeysuckle, around which humming-birds poised and darted in arcadian security, inconceivable now.

The northern line of the hill-district ran up Pinckney Street its whole length, forming there a definite barrier; below it was a region of tenement houses into which Joy Street descended. This was the limit of the poorer quarter. The precincts of the West Church on Cambridge Street, well-built Hancock, Temple, Bowdoin, and Somerset Streets leading toward the church and a fashionable hotel, the Revere House, on Bowdoin Square, made here even the north side of the hill available.

Between Pinckney Street and the Common, along the hill-summit, on its southern and western slopes, strong in natural supremacy, lay the sheltered Boston of tempered winds and unexpected glimpses of the river, the western hills, and setting sun; the Boston of Louisburg Square, of Chestnut and Mount Vernon Streets, culminating in the wider outlook and gentler slope of Beacon Street, open to land and water views,—the street "that fronts the sun" in another early Holmes poem, "Contentment."

Within these narrow limits which seemed irrevocably fixed, as they were nature's own, our "little old" Trimountain was comprised.


SODA

Time's Inflictions

III

TIME'S INFLICTIONS

ENTERING now by that same harbor approach after all the changing years, one is confronted in the very sky-line by a contrast strange indeed. The dome-crowned summit has ceased to be conspicuous; the attendant steeples are swept away; and, though the city seal remains in use, the Boston reproduced upon it has given place to a distorted mass of towering warehouses, office-buildings, and reeking smoke-stacks extended far and wide. The distortion lacks, thus far, that almost phantasmagoric beauty with which similar hazards of time and change have endowered lower New York when the lights in the tall buildings about the Battery flash up one after another, as we draw nearer in

the twilight from the sea; but there "all is fortune"; for, by day, no more harmony appears in the interrelation of those gigantic hives of commerce than in our own city, or, indeed, in any other afflicted with the heedless rush of modern civilization. It is only gathering darkness that lends enchantment to their view.

Upon the Boston water-front vast, progressive utilitarian ugliness has settled down. East Boston is now a crowded port of arrival and departure, with acres upon acres of docks, railway lines, and a mammoth grain elevator in the foreground. A tunnel cuts into the quietude of Maverick Square, obliterating it; and such old houses as the neighborhood retains seem dismally out of place in the overcharged atmosphere.

The old harbor-line of the city proper is no longer distinguishable. Its wharves,

curtailed of fair proportion by a connecting link, the wide Atlantic Avenue, and covered with freight-shelters, have lost individuality. T Wharf of the fishing-schooners still keeps something of the former aspect amid incredible alterations. The once-admired Custom House has dwindled to the foundation of a twentieth-century tower, soon to dominate sea and land. The sidewalks of State Street, where the merchants met "on 'Change," are overshadowed by disproportionate strongholds, beyond which the Old State House, though pathetically dwarfed, asserts itself in triumphant contrast. Deprived of its monumental steps and salient portico, yet otherwise miraculously preserved and perfectly restored within, our Town House of 1747 stands as a mute reminder of the penalty prosperity exacts in loss of distinction. Many times threat-

ened by the oft-recurring destructive mania which has annihilated other noble landmarks, this building and the historic Old South Church near by it are secure at last, thanks to the patriotic efforts of certain good citizens for whose persistence we cannot be too grateful.

Why did not we keep the Province House, too, opposite the meeting-house? That went a whole century ago. Of course, we all say that if we had it to-day we should keep it; and, perhaps, with the aid of Hawthorne's genius we might have carried through another crusade, had no other demand been urgent. It is always possible to do one thing at a time. We have still the queer labyrinth of lanes and courts around its site, which has lost caste of late, so that all trace of the house-front is gone. A few years ago we could count its windows, and find at one of

them Peter Sergeant's iron balcony with his initials wrought into it. He was the builder, *anno* 1667. Its next-door neighbor in point of date as well as situation is the shop-building at the corner of School Street,—once the Old Corner Bookstore of happy memories. That was built just after the great fire of 1711, and is called the oldest brick structure in Boston. It is horribly made over now.

Apropos of the lanes and courts, nothing plays the mischief with them sooner than tall buildings. They become mere exits and entrances, and lose all character. There, close by, is Williams Court, nicknamed "Pie Alley" from its numerous taverns. Its only feature left is the Bell-in-Hand, marked by a wooden hand swinging a bell over the door. The sign bears the date of 1795 and was set up by the town crier, who served ale in the

pewter when there were no lost children, — as the latest incumbent serves it to-day.

Here are the precincts of Quincy Market showing little change. The long, low granite building, lined with stalls, is still in daily use, and over Faneuil Hall Drowne's grasshopper still veers with every wind. This, the North End? One searches vainly, at first, for any trace of colonial settlement in its Babel of nationalities. Foreign shops and signs make all lines unfamiliar, and the chatter of strange dialects is heard everywhere. Salem Street has become a teeming Jewish quarter; North Square is a breathing-place — a *piazza* — for the Italian district, where amid uncouth surroundings stands the house of Paul Revere, another brand from the burning, guarded as a goal of pilgrimage. The restoration of the patri-

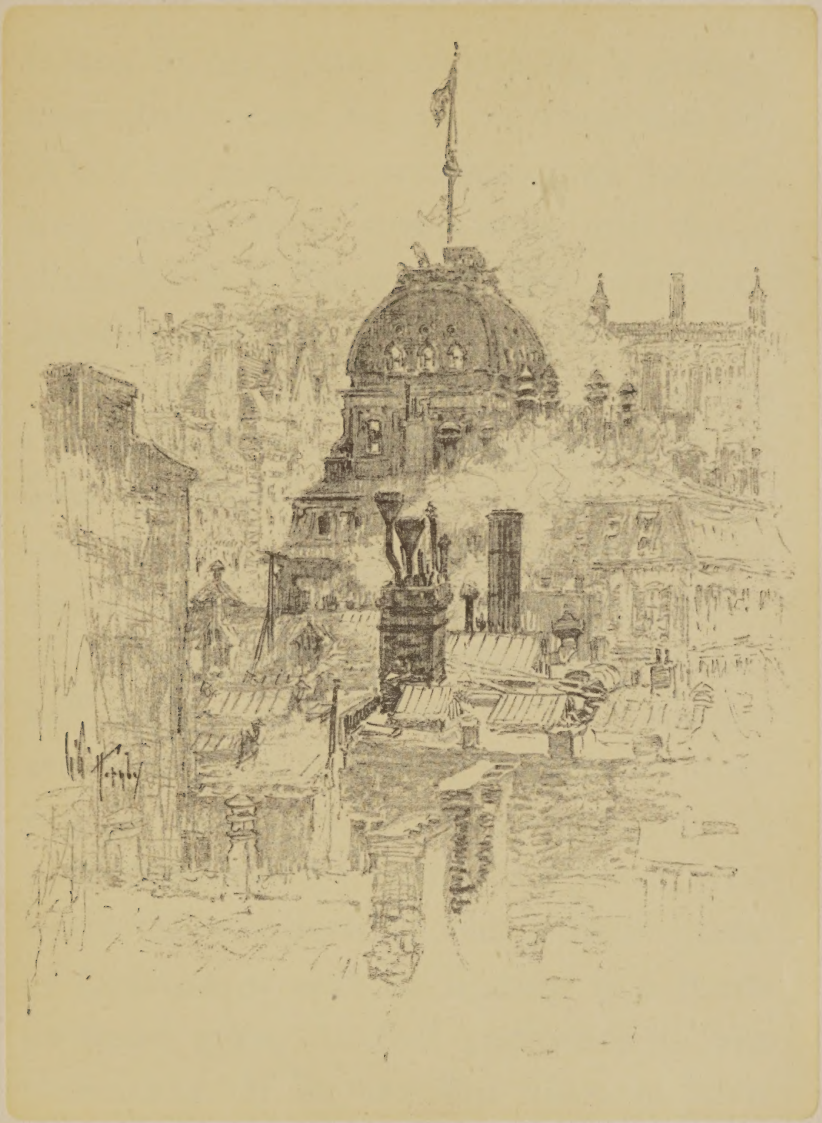
BIERA

ot's abode has been careful and complete; aside from association with him it recalls vividly the life of the time, justifying the enthusiasm of an English traveller who lately described it as the best "sight" in Boston.

Once more at Christ Church of the lanterns, marked now by a commemorative tablet, we step back into the past. The peace of Hull Street yet abides there, though its single row of house-fronts is painfully modernized. The graveyard where the Mathers lie entombed is changed only in its view, which now includes a park in the immediate foreground at the water's edge, — a well-planned outlet of the neighborhood, much needed, much frequented. Change and improvement here have gone hand in hand.

In city graveyards of early date what compelling fascination there is for old

and young alike! A few years ago, when we underwent a convention, its Western delegates swarmed in the Granary, King's Chapel, and other consecrated grounds to take "squeezes" of the inscriptions, until the turf was trampled into dust. They had never looked upon anything so old! We, who have such antiquities near at hand, take them more calmly, but admit the charm, which is partly due, no doubt, to the sextons in charge, moss-grown and hoary as they are, with the very slant of the headstones,—their absorbing interest. If not antiquarian by nature, they soon become so through habit. The shepherd of Copp's Hill has all his flock at his tongue's end. He talks of them as if they lived, and on their account resents the decline in Hull Street. Just over there, only yesterday, stood a wooden house in its garden, once the headquarters of General



Gates. It has gone; everything is going; they don't care for us as they should. When his neighbor sextons come to call, they count their sheep, sigh, and shake their heads. There are few reinforcements nowadays.

One such neighbor of his, just across the park, over in Charlestown, keeps his fold on Burial Hill, a wonderful little spot of greenery hemmed in by houses, like a City of London churchyard. Some of its stones were shattered on Bunker Hill day,—the first; and it has a monument to John Harvard, though he does not lie underneath. His burial-place is uncertain, but the faithful shepherd, who bears the wonderfully sympathetic name of Lydston, is sure of finding him there in some grave of that enclosure as yet unmarked. If he can but discover John Harvard's bones and thereby prove his

contention, he will die happy. Peace to all the tenants before and after him and to their ashes!

Turning from Snow Hill Street into the old paths of intricacy through bewildering haunts of foreign immigration, one may proceed to rediscover crooked little Marshall Street and the Boston Stone. Beyond it, through expansion and advancement, all seems suddenly to go up in air. Brattle Street Church is non-existent and forgotten. Scollay's Buildings have been levelled; and around their site business blocks, huge, unrelated masses, darkening streets too narrow for them, cut into the sky. Court Street has become a lane, upper Beacon Street a dim crevasse; down the vista of Tremont Street, under walls that replace the well-remembered Boston Museum, the simple strength of King's Chapel, seen from Scollay Square islanded

PAUL REVERE RESTAURANT
C. FERULLO
BANK

among its graves, is a refreshment to the eye, but sadly out of scale. One hurries through Pemberton Square, oppressed by the swollen bulk of the Court-House and its dependencies where the lawyers make skyward for light and air in rushing elevators, to come upon the Athenæum crowded by domineering neighbors, that having despoiled it of dignity seem to be elbowing it away. A few steps more bring light, air, and distance,—the beautiful slope of the Common over which the restrained front of the State House, Bulfinch's masterpiece, admirably placed, looks down. At once, all seems traditional, endeared to the mature native by earliest association; yet, in reality, apart from the terraced seat of government and one or two more survivals of his fond remembrance, a new city opens up before him.

He will speedily become aware of this

if he lingers for a stroll in the old Common, where, two centuries ago, "gallants were wont to walk with their marmalet madams," and, even in his own youth, along some narrow, shady path he could seek retirement and find it. Halfway down the incline he will shrink instinctively from the havoc wrought upon the lower side, where there is no longer a boundary other than that of the monstrous, incoherent Tremont Street frontage in which Saint Paul's Church has suffered worse indignities than the Athenæum. The Tremont Street Mall, once shaded by giant elms, now broils in the sun, a paved *trottoir;* no other word than the imported one will adequately describe it. In the Common and yet out of it, absurdly rechristened "Lafayette Mall," it is neither mall nor sidewalk, but a glaring platform between subway exits and en-

trances, except in their use to be avoided. To anglicize the French word, it is a "trottery,"—no more, no less. As he turns from it the native stroller may glance at the spire of Park Street Church tapering above the trees, to be grateful that, though a line of shop fronts has transformed the street, "Brimstone Corner" still is there, and to recall with a smile, perhaps, its ancient legend. Of that Mr. Howe, in his interesting "Boston Common," prints a rhymed version; but it used to be transmitted by word of mouth somewhat as follows: —

"The Wind and the Devil, newly arrived, walked together long ago in Boston streets, and coming upon Park Street Church stopped before it with admiration. 'A fine place, that!' said the Devil; 'let us step inside to inspect it!' 'Nay, Brother Nick,' replied the Wind, 'go thou in

alone, and welcome, while I tarry for thee here without.' The Devil entered, accordingly; but in that sanctified spot over him was cast a sudden spell which he could not remove. He tried in vain to get out; and the Wind has waited for him on Park Street Corner ever since."

Who are "wont to walk" now in Governor Winthrop's "trayning-ground"? Some of it is left. There is the scene of the Quaker executions, *circa* 1660, and, in the next century, of young Woodbridge's fatal duel, touchingly recorded by the Autocrat, who made his own Long Path from Joy Street to Boylston Street memorable. There, and there again, were the fortifications of the siege of 1775. Here, in later times, the Governor of Massachusetts annually "took his seat" on the Parade Ground, where Lafayette reviewed our militia, where the volunteers of the Civil

War encamped and were mustered out. Here is the Frog Pond, where all our dogs went "in swimming," except on one day of the week. "No Dogs Allowed in This Pond on Sundays" used to be the curb-sign, which was removed about the time that Saturday night performances were first permitted in our old Museum, the orthodox theatre; and that was not until the year 1871. Here is that other Long Path from Park Street to West Street, the best coast in the world, if the boys only knew it! Here, in short, are all our accumulated memories, intimate, public, private; the storehouse is packed with them.

But who walks there any more, using "walk" in its larger sense of walk-*taking?* It is generally a loafing-ground, where to take a walk would be distasteful, — and for some at all hours it remains only

that. One wonders how there happen always to be so many of this leisure class! For others, it has become a restless footway refreshingly open to sky, air, and sunshine, yet a mere cross-cut between the new city in the west and the darkened channels of trade leading to commerce and the sea. Inevitable result of growth in population! The Common could not move westward like the course of empire. Lying where it did, it is "downtown" now, itself; one must look farther for even an approach to seclusion.

Early on some spring or summer morning, when for the moment tranquillity is restored, the old charm revives. After years of defacement and neglect, the place holds something of its ancient beauty, to enter now, it is to be hoped, through the inherited Parkman millions, upon years of regeneration. They have put up in it

a graceful temple of music, *à la* Watteau, already. It is a good sign. But with constant care and an edict against asphalt, we could afford to take our adornments sparingly. The Common is, or was, its own best decoration.

Turning through that corner gate, — the only one remaining, — we perceive at once that Charles Street has fallen into evil days. Its trees are gone; it has lost all semblance of picturesqueness. Many cheerful dwellings are replaced by shops, or given over now to "careless ruin" on that broad highway of thunderous traffic from which the householders have nearly all departed. Yet here and there pleasant traces linger of the former state, deserving recognition. Since the memorial tablet is now high in favor, a fitting one should, certainly, be placed upon the front of Number 110, still outwardly unchanged,

where once lived John Albion Andrew, our great "War-Governor." And a little farther on, outwardly and inwardly the same, is the famous "long drawing-room" which enshrines all that was best of Boston in many good old times,—the Boston that Thackeray likened to an English cathedral town, that Dickens loved; the Boston of great New England names; of others, too, before and after them. This generous hospitality was theirs once; here they dropped in for breakfasts as rare as those renowned in London of the poet Rogers; or, in the golden light of afternoon, looked westward across the lawn, through trees that then were young, upon the river and the sunset. Their portraits are on the walls; first impressions of their books lie close at hand, with their own marginal notes upon the clearly printed pages; their letters, too, their manuscripts. To

pass from the noise and dust into that radiant treasure-house of precious memories is to become, like Tennyson's heroic wanderer, "a part of all that we have met" in all our choicest reading. In that quiet haven the tidal wave without sweeps by, disregarded. It is not a room, but a sanctuary!

Time's Amendments

IV

TIME'S AMENDMENTS

CONTINUALLY to commend the old at the expense of the new is a melancholy piece of business,—yes, and wearisome. The past is past; and though we may learn its lesson, which, probably, will avail us little rather than much, it is never to be recovered with any backward footsteps. Our only course is to push on unceasingly. We can but cry, "Forward, march!" and be alert, as we keep moving.

Time works wonders of good as well as of evil, and has showered upon Boston favoring gifts with liberal hand. Near by is one of the best,— the Public Garden, that pleasing intervale encompassed by what is old and what is new, which in the olden time that we like to call golden

was little better than a wilderness, where the strolling circus-rider in the spring-time pitched his tent and trampled down his ring. Here the camels are coming, as we foretold. The desert of their years was the vacant, sandy tract filling in the Bay, which turned but slowly into streets. The wooden Coliseum for the Peace Jubilee in 1869 stood where Trinity Church now is, and we approached it through acres of desolation.

Of the many springs that have blossomed over the Garden since that time each, in turn, added some beauty to it. Fine specimens of flowering trees shade its winding walks, and its borders glow continuously with the colors of the rainbow in swift succession. Its straight central path fulfils the ever-present need of a cross-cut for hurrying toilers, who thus leave the rest in comparative repose. Cer-

tain of its decorative features might be reformed or done away with, yet none can be said to offend. The gates are never closed; well planned, well tended, it is a constant delight to the eye. The view of it and the Common beyond, with Ball's really good equestrian Washington in the foreground, as one enters the city's heart from the westward, opens up a splendid effect of surprise, unsurpassed anywhere. In short, both for site and for general arrangement, a better example than this of the civic garden it would be hard to find.

Looking west from the Garden, we perceive at once the sky-line of Arlington Street,—the only perfect street-line in all the city. This is said to have originated with Richard Morris Hunt, years before the uniformity of lines at the Columbian Exhibition impressed itself upon all be-

holders. We saw, we approved its importance in Chicago, only to dismiss the scheme as a practical impossibility. Neither there nor elsewhere — except in Washington, under government control — is the advantage of such lineal agreement realized. The landed proprietor accepts professional guidance only for his own direct benefit, generally with no consideration of his nearest neighbor. For all our latter-day enlightenment, we create in this regard lamentable confusion; and when, by some fortunate circumstance, a good result has been secured, we proceed to destroy it. Even now, the line of Arlington Street, carefully considered, justly admired, has been sacrificed, is going. There is no law of taste to stay the vandal's hand.

At Arlington Street begins the new city, built where the tide-water once

ebbed and flowed. Out toward the west, streets of handsome houses run straight for the first mile, or more. The continuation of Beacon Street, overlooking on the north side Charles River Basin, follows the old Mill-Dam which one hoary, contorted poplar tree recalls. The names of Marlborough and Newbury Streets descend from eighteenth-century Boston, where they were attached to successive divisions of what now is Washington Street. They have thus local aptness which is not always recognized. Between them is Commonwealth Avenue, most favored of Boston streets in its restriction from shops and a central, shaded parkway. The distinguishing feature there is a fine Romanesque church-tower of Richardson; but on either hand are many interesting house-fronts by McKim and others, the best of them in their re-

straint reminiscent of an earlier time. Near the Somerset Hotel, at the entrance of the Fenway, the Avenue bends to prolong itself far beyond the city limits and wind out among the hills in that suburban region, still beautiful, of easy access on all sides, which contributes much to Boston's pleasurable resources.

The cross-streets that come at regular intervals with high-sounding names, originally stigmatized as pretentious, conform in their initial letters to the order of the alphabet,—Arlington, Berkeley, Clarendon, Dartmouth, and so on. They have acquired so many associations that the critics have in a measure forgotten the charge. The system, however defective it may be in this instance, is certainly more convenient and more harmonious than the numerical one employed in many American cities. Their names grew up

with them, and are mere matters of course now.

Dartmouth Street, followed southward, leads to Copley Square, an open area in the midst of all this new construction, which is commonly called the Back Bay from the circumstances of its origin. The square was awkwardly laid out with the odd effect of narrowing it, at first sight, to a triangle, — a fault long since admitted, and so often discussed that its correction by simple means can be but a question of time; especially as with the city's rapid growth this point will soon lie at its very heart. Boylston Street, given up to modern shops, intersects it on the northern side. Huntington Avenue, leading to Horticultural and Symphony Halls, the Conservatory of Music, the Opera House, and Museum of Fine Arts, begins at the southwestern corner. Be-

tween these outlets, facing the square on the west, stands the beautiful Public Library of McKim, in the style of the Italian Renaissance, already overtopped and injured in its lines by structures of later mushroom growth beyond it. On the site of the old Art Museum, occupying nearly all the southern side, is a new hotel in modified Renaissance. Richardson's masterpiece, Trinity Church, Romanesque in design, faces the Library on the east, so well detached that a fine view of it may be obtained from many points; the "New Old South" Church at the northwestern corner, with a lofty bell-tower, is of North Italian Gothic. In the disjointed, haphazard scheme, set all awry, one must study each building separately to admire it. That is always possible, except upon the northern boundary of disfiguring shops and offices, which are so far

from admirable that they must yield ere long to something else; with what bizarre result none may foresee.

Beyond Hereford Street comes wide, wind-swept Massachusetts Avenue, running northward over Harvard Bridge through Cambridge and Arlington far out among the hills. Near by, at the Charlesgate, begins the Fenway,—a low-lying combination of stream, marshland, foot and bridle path, designed by the elder Olmsted to provide for the overflow of Stony Brook and Muddy Creek, two minor tributaries of the Charles which were troublesome in times of flood. The limitations of the narrow strip, stretching indeterminately south and west, have been cleverly disguised by judicious planting of shrubs and shade trees. Along its borders are groups of fine buildings; that of the Massachusetts Historical Society,

and the adjoining Medical Library, beyond which the white dome of the Christian Science Church rises against the sky; the Museum of Fine Arts, and its luxurious neighbor, that private museum, displaying its rare collection within the walls of a Venetian palace, built around a garden-court wondrous in its scheme; Simmons College, and the Harvard Medical School with its broad esplanade, to which an adequate approach has been furnished in the new Avenue Louis Pasteur.

In one of Miss Beatrice Herford's entertaining monologues, a member of the new "Let-It-Alone Club" explains the purpose of its association; namely, to "look for something which is getting along perfectly well, and then,—just let it alone!" Would that more and many of us might be admitted to that club!

— for reluctance to let things alone is one of our most exasperating Yankee failings. We take the utmost pains to build up, only inconsiderately to tear down again. Here, now, a part of this ornamental Fenway plantation has fallen under the destroyer's hand for a detrimental diversion of the architect's careful plan to other uses. Prevention, rather than possession, would be nine points of our law, could we but accomplish it. Alas! the date of the millennium no longer is determined; though all may hope for that blissful state, none now makes ready his ascension-robe.

Meanwhile, for a brief moment, there is nowhere a pleasanter short walk than that along the Creek branch of the Fenway through Longwood to Brookline; and this is but the direct means of access to our series of parks, which includes the

shores of Jamaica Pond, the Arnold Arboretum, Franklin Park, and the wilder Metropolitan Reservation of woodland that surrounds Blue Hill; supplementing them, to make full circle, are the Marine Park at South Boston, Beaver Brook with the Waverley Oaks, and the tract of hill, dale, and wilderness known as the Middlesex Fells on the north. Fortunately, these are not wholly at the mercy of rapidly shifting political administrations. Vigilant commissions do their best to defend the entire system and its approaches from disfigurement. Great natural advantages were bestowed upon us. Their wise adaptation to the needs of a growing community is recognized, wherever known.

Our latest acquisition in this kind for the public benefit is the completed Esplanade along the shores of Charles River Ba-

sin, behind Beacon and Brimmer Streets. The wasted opportunities, there, formed a subject of discussion through many years, — fifty, at least; for just before the filling-in of Commonwealth Avenue began, during the late fifties of the last century, a small but persistent group of citizens eagerly urged a water-way, crossed by bridges at intervals, in place of a central mall along it. The suggestion came from the Alster-Basin at Hamburg, views of which were submitted with the proposed plan. Despite all endeavor of the active minority, that project failed, and the park-way was laid out, as it now stands. The open basin remained for possible improvement, which languished, however, throughout a generation; until the first step was taken in the opening of the Charlesbank, as that portion of the embankment skirting Charles Street below West Boston

Bridge is called. Provided with public playgrounds and open-air gymnasia, which found immediate favor, it continues to be the resort of an outlying over-populous quarter. Its much-desired extension awaited the building of a dam below the bridge to exclude tide-water and regulate the river's height. With these introductory measures accomplished, the work was resumed and, notwithstanding vigorous opposition, was carried through most successfully, as even the opponents must now concede.

Following the water's level between the new West Boston and the Harvard Bridges, with a wide-extended outlook ever varying in atmospheric effects, the Charles River Esplanade has become the favorite walk of all classes at all times and seasons. In spring and autumn, boatmen flash by the railing with gleaming oars; far out on the

lagoon flocks of white sea-fowl settle down; and in midwinter the ice is thronged with skaters. The old Hill-town, in a new aspect, through the long streets opening up from the embankment to the State House dome, closes the eastern prospect. Westward are the heights of Brookline, seen dimly through the morning haze, a study in gray-and-silver, or sharply outlined and aglow with color under the declining sun. At dusk, the lamps of the bridges send their shafts of light into the depths below, after the Venetian manner. Here, new color-schemes, in all terms of music from *aubade* to *nocturne*, are invented daily. Here, all triumphs of Whistler and Monet are outdone.

To follow up the walk behind the imposing walls of Bay State Road at its acute angle is to make the scene still more comprehensive. The Cambridge

shore, where the finished embankment runs far up the river, is largely vacant, problematic; but the new acres of the Institute of Technology below Harvard Bridge promise a long river-front and landing, suggesting glorious architectural possibilities. The step that costs there is already taken.

At any hour of the day one may turn from the whirling, dusty street to the quiet Esplanade and find refreshment where motors never come. It has lived down its detractors. Even the most recalcitrant abutters who resented invasion of their privacy will in the end agree that this was not one of our mistakes, though we are human and have made many, Heaven knows! We have lost some priceless things; have bartered some, through greed; ignorantly have squandered others. We cannot help it now, and the night is

young, for all that. As they said of old in the melodrama that delighted us, "Up, Lancers!" Let us move on. "Though much is taken, much abides."

Dwellers on the Hill

V

DWELLERS ON THE HILL

ONE tempted to assume a righteous gift of prophecy, when transition fairly set in, might easily have found there incontestable proof that the Hill as a dwelling-place was destined to speedy degradation, if not to abandonment; he, surely, could not have foreseen that, by a happy caprice of fortune, something very like the contrary would occur. The habitable quarter on the northern slope, cut off by the extension of the State House and the encroachment of other public buildings, has changed character, it is true, to become lost ground, forlorn, with a debatable future. That of the rest seemed equally doubtful while the summit was in a state of upheaval. The new inhabitants

of the new houses in the new streets toward the west shook their heads and made disparaging remarks concerning antiquity, remoteness, decay, and downfall; but certain old inhabitants stood firm, even though their neighbors moved away, declaring that their houses were ancestral and dated from a time when all builders were conscientious, self-respecting; that, if distance must be considered, the Hill was directly in the way, not out of it; and that no amount of scoffing should impel them to part with their inheritance. Nevertheless, many doors were closed; the placard of the broker hung in the dusty windows; lodgers came and went; fashion looked askance; and the trend of the conditions was downward.

Little by little, however, the novelty of settlement upon the manufactured land wore off, and a younger generation

sprang up to rediscover that the Hill had practical advantages together with a definite charm; that it had, moreover, a long-established climate, less blustering and less gritty than the new one of the fashionable quarter. Unexpectedly, one small wave halted, settled back, and with a rush swept up the Hill, gathering impetus and volume in its course; it became, indeed, not so much a question of going as of getting there at all, since occupancy was limited. The advancing wave flooded the highways and the by-ways also; and as those upon the crest of it happened to be gifted with an artistic sense, they treated their new possessions appreciatively, instead of pulling them down, happily restoring them. The imitative sheep who had followed their lead in the backward flight, promptly followed likewise their example, as if to prove that they, too,

knew a good thing when they saw it. The fortunate result is that the wide, western slope of the Hill stands now much as it stood in the pleasant days of old, helped rather than impaired by a spruce, almost jaunty air of rejuvenation.

Strangely enough, it was Beacon Street that suffered most in the long period of doubt and difficulty; old Beacon Street, over against the Common, with its superb view which reminds every Englishman of that from Piccadilly across the Green Park, and must force him to admit that ours, if less extensive, is the fairer of the two; Beacon Street, where stood upon its terraces the house of Governor Hancock, which should have been made an official abode for his successors. That went in war-time, when the patriotic impulse that would have saved it now was diverted to distressing needs. Aggressive examples of

modern architecture crowded out simple, unassuming detail, breaking the agreeable sky-line which ruthless apartment-builders turned into an eyesore. Trade crept down below the State House, and shop-windows began to appear in first-floor rooms. They are still there, but through tacit concession, have generally been managed with such reserve, that they offend the eye less than one had reason to fear. Fully half the good old houses remain intact, — among others those of Prescott, the historian, and Parkman, the benefactor of the Common, the latter newly inscribed; here is the very balcony from which, in Victoria's heyday, we boys saluted the Prince of Wales who waited so long to become Edward VII, as he rode down the street on the best black horse that the State could furnish; here are the same gate-posts which we climbed to cheer the

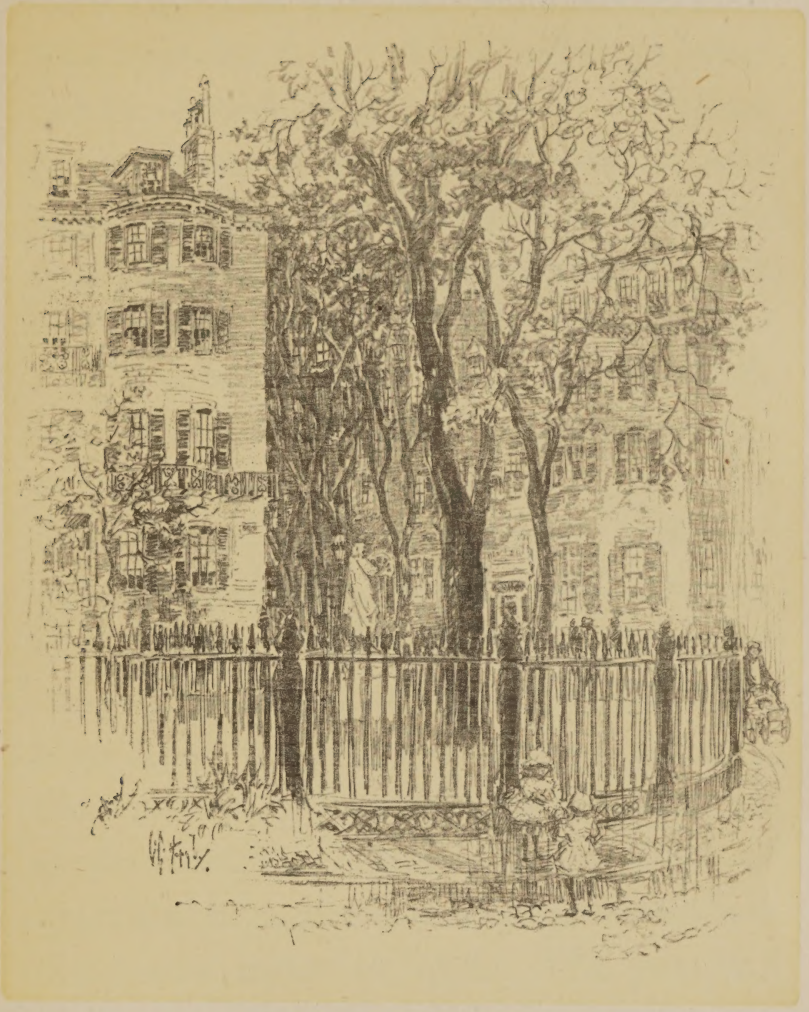
thinned ranks of our regiments, marching home from the war; there, opposite the Shaw monument, is the stone platform before the State House, where Governor Andrew tenderly took leave of them, when their ranks were filled, and they marched away. O memory! Æolian harp that breathes its plaintive refrain into our ears, whether we will or no! And yet without remembrance what were life? It may be that the worst is over, that reaction has set in, even that some of the damage already done will in the end prove reparable.

However that shall be, one need turn but a few steps aside to rejoice in and strengthen early associations. Those old houses at the top of Pinckney Street stand as they did endwise to the sidewalk, with their quaint door-yards running back irregularly beneath sturdy ailanthus trees.

The same bricks of many colors are underfoot; the same worn granite curbstones with their deep-cut, cabalistic crosses, whose meaning was never clear, perplex us now. That fan-lighted door has never been remodelled. Here the narrow street plunges straight down to the river in the old sharp pitch, and Anderson Street, to the right, falls off still more abruptly to the distant Bulfinch front of the Hospital far below. Down a little, opens to the left Louisburg Square, a precinct within a precinct, having laws unto itself, strictly maintained by the householders. The slender fountain has been removed from its shaded ellipse, but the statues of Columbus and Aristides mount guard over it at either end, as rigid as the laws themselves. It is too late now to wonder what motive governed the choice of the heroic Genoese and just Athenian as tutelary spirits of

the place; they were roughly moulded, of a century-old garden type; time-worn and weather-stained, they have become venerable relics, part and parcel of the square, like the antiquated iron barrier defending its thick turf from every human foot, or the stout, satisfactory, red-brick houses. Howells, our honored Dean of Letters, lived once at Number 4, on the lower side; and at Number 20, Jenny Lind was married to Otto Goldschmidt in the year 1851. The steps down which she passed upon her wedding-journey might guide her back to-day.

The spreading elms and horse-chestnuts arch over wide Mount Vernon Street, framing in the belfried church at the foot of the Hill, the river and the western sky beyond. Its long line of frontage standing apart behind terraced lawns has an air of dignified reserve, sustained by an-



cient rights of way and stern restrictions. The opposite range of low buildings never can be carried higher; under one of those ground-floor domiciles runs a dark passage, through which cows were once driven to graze upon the Common; and this path is still kept open, though there are no longer cows to profit by it. On the north side, lived Mrs. Sarah Wyman Whitman, of high artistic achievement, never to be dimmed; of noble public spirit and rare gift of friendship, fondly remembered; and Thomas Bailey Aldrich, poet and story-teller of surpassing charm, the nimblest frolic wit that ever flashed across a dinner-table. Driveways, forecourts, and gardens, oddly disposed, give a sense of space and of individual arrangement when there was room to spare. The peculiar character of the street pervades its adjacent dependencies, Walnut Street and Mount

Vernon Place; even the deep defile of Acorn Street, whose single row of picturesque, shallow houses, built in a good period, has lately been reclaimed and restored.

If Mount Vernon Street is the most dignified in the self-respecting Hill-town, Chestnut Street may be called its most genial one. On that gracious slope sunshine seems always to settle, slanting in among the linden leaves. There is no aloofness in the fine old doors and windows and graceful open porches, which look, rather, as if they were pressing forward with hospitable intent to give assurance of a kindly welcome within. Everything about them is carefully kept up in the polished neatness of a Dutch town, suggesting common agreement and the intimate relations of a long-established neighborhood. Many of the ampler fronts

have, too, a uniformity of style, dating from the street's first days and making them sharers in all its history. Were that chronicled, much merry hospitality would figure in it, together with many a well-remembered name. Francis Parkman lived there long; Edwin Booth was tenant for a time; other tenants early and late are not forgotten. Generation has succeeded generation, transmitting cheerfulness. In spite of ripened age, there are no haunted houses.

Connected with the street, however, is one strange circumstance of a supernatural cast, never fully explained. Once, it was said that a ghost walked there,—discreetly, having the good taste to come in broad daylight; and thus does the story detach itself clearly from the background of remembrance: —

Eighty years ago, or more, on a fine

October morning, two girls sat sewing in a chamber-window, halfway up the Hill. One of them had just become engaged; and, glancing from her needlework, her younger sister saw passing the house on the opposite sidewalk the figure of a man, whom she took to be her prospective brother-in-law.

"Look!" she said, "there 's George!"

"It can't be!" answered the other. "George is in the country on an all-day shooting expedition. He was to start two hours ago; and yet,—why, it is he, surely!"

Instantly, as if to remove all doubt, the man looked up, recognized them, smiled, and bowed; then passed on, to turn and smile once more. The sisters accepted the fact of his presence through some unexpected delay, and dismissed the thought of it. But at that hour, in the country, the lover was killed by the

accidental discharge of his shot-gun as he climbed over a wall. Was the passer-by an unknown double in the flesh, turning up coincidently in Chestnut Street, never to be seen again? Or was it the familiar, well-authenticated wraith of German legend? All the characters in this good Boston one have passed on now down the street; the living are numbered with the dead, and we shall never know.

The ghosts that walk by day there now are neither dreadful nor mysterious, but only such as may gather round each one of us in some spot, tenderly recalled, when our steps turn back into it. Dim at times, at times distinct, they smile upon us from the doors, or greet us as they pass with cheery voices. While they draw near, our hearts beat higher, with a warmer welcome; we grow gay, expectant, young in their companionship. They are the friendly spirits,

invisible to the boatman, that crossed the ferry with the poet, Uhland, — illusions not lost, but gained, bringing with them a gift akin to second sight, the power to conjure up what was happiest and best in bygone years.

> "Soul-like were those hours of yore —
> Let us walk in soul once more!"

But to make the most of that profitable encounter, one must walk over the Hill alone.

While the city surges round them, the dwellers on the Hill cling tenaciously to the traditions of a neighborhood and maintain them with an earnestness unmatched in most communities. They have their own pleasant manners and customs, their neighbor-parties and neighbor-clubs. On Christmas Eve, all their windows are lighted up, and organized bands of "waits"

sing carols at the doors. Their influence extends throughout the whole of what may be called their tree-plantation, whether it be named Chestnut, Walnut, Willow, Spruce, Acorn, Cedar, or the newgrafted Lime; and it has spread to that subsidiary region at the Hill's foot, artfully dovetailed along the river-embankment,—to Brimmer Street, three-cornered Mount Vernon Square, and many-angled Otis Place; so, onward, into its latest embellishment, Charles River Square, that modern example of the good which may be wrought by artistic house-grouping, as successful in its simple way as the mellowed crescent of an English Georgian town.

The force of the Hill's reviving wave was cumulative, has never slackened, is likely to hold and endure; every sign confirms it. With all dwellers on the Hill, old and new, we clink the glasses hospit-

ably held out to us, and, rising, pledge them in a toast: Health to them while they live, and lasting remembrance when they are gone!

The Soul of the City

VI

THE SOUL OF THE CITY

WE have heard a Yankee village maxim, tersely put, veiling profound truth in the vernacular, to the effect that "There 's as much difference in some folks, as there is in anybody." One may paraphrase, perhaps, if not translate its oracular emphasis in the more familiar terms of another New England adage, namely, "It takes all kinds of folks to make a world." Now, in a broader sense than generally appears, each community is, in itself, a world; the smaller being a reflection of the greater, as in a concave glass; all the more impressive because at close range we may peer into the cup and study its minutiæ to the best advantage. Some of these are sure, at first,

to assume exaggerated importance, obscuring a larger view; yet the longer we look, the clearer will be our vision; and if we take time to wait until the nearer cloud drifts by, it will be to find closer and closer resemblances amid the worlds we know. One star may differ from another star in glory, but, with due allowance made, the stars are wonderfully alike, after all.

Here is a case in point,—a minor one; an atom of star-drift among many well suited to adorn a tale. Every one recognizes an inordinate passion in the Bostonian, especially of the softer sex, for attending lectures. It has been the theme of many a quip. "'I am going to a lecture, sir,' she said," ran the old parody of "My pretty maid!" And the maiden's sisters rush from one discourse to another with a vehemence that provoked one of

our first citizens wittily to call Boston women mere "devotees of opportunity." Only yesterday, one of them asserted in all seriousness, "I do just love a lecture, — on *anything!*" Undoubtedly, this craving for the free, "popular" conference is genuine; deeper, too, and more widely diffused, as one might swear, than anywhere else in all the world.

Who would imagine, for an instant, that our New England ardor for absorbing instruction of any kind, gratis, could be matched, nay, even surpassed *sur les bords de la Seine?* Yet it is a fact that we know not its full capacity until we have seen the Parisians compete for places at the Sorbonne; or crowd some lesser court of the Louvre at Reinach's course on Art, until hundreds are turned back, while those who have pushed on are content, — women, before all, — if the seats are

filled, to sit upon the floor rather than give up the game! Did any one, man or woman, ever sit upon the floor for an hour at the Lowell Institute? If so, no mention of the fact has yet been made.

In the face of such an instance how shall we discriminate, how deduce, how draw conclusions, where the desire of getting something for nothing is concerned? "At night all cats are gray," and human nature seems to differ only in degree through all the possible worlds. For there, too, is that supreme self-complacence of ours, which the wise men have touched upon, the paramount importance of our own affairs suggested by "Hub" and "Solar System" references. Paris, again! Never was man so enveloped in an earthly scene to the exclusion of all else, as the Parisian in his Boulevard. He refuses to look beyond it in art or literature. The

new comedy at the Français, the drama at the Vaudeville, the latest "vient de paraître" of the publisher, the current picture-exhibition of "les Épatants" bound his horizon. And how about our superlative rapture over the passing foreign novelty? Why, that is London, pure and simple. Did not the world's metropolis lose its head over "Bison Jack," until he became for a time the boon table-companion of "lords, dukes, and earls"? Their West End comes nearer true loyalty than ours, because it is larger; as the late Mr. Travers stammered more at home than in Baltimore, because New York was a "b-big-g-ger place!"

New York has mad raptures also, which prove different only in kind when we get at them; but it is hard to distinguish specks in a whirlpool; whereas, Boston is so set up on its little hill that it cannot

be hid. They "spot" us easily, and make their little joke. When after desperate pangs of labor, aided by a deft *accoucheur*, we gave birth at last to an Opera House, and were pleased with it, the Empire City looked at us languidly through the large end of the glass, and cracked its merriest jest of all: "An Opera House? Ah, yes; the first Unitarian!" We can forgive them much for that!

One minor perplexity of theirs we should like to unravel, if that were possible, for they hurl it at our heads insistently whenever they come our way; but we confess that the solution is not easy. They look down the broad Back Bay streets where few are passing, to inquire for our handsome women; and turn into the busy marts of retail trade to note the crowd innumerable of female faces hurrying by, the pale, the keen, the dull, the

careworn, and the stolid, — all unlovely, —to repeat their pointed question, "Your handsome women, where are they? We know you have them, for we see them in New York, and the type is unmistakable. Once again, where are they?" Not there; the Bostonian is equally cognizant of the peculiar fact, and, remembering Fifth Avenue, perceives here the contrasting lack-lustre eyes; but he is conscious, too, that these are but myrmidons of the Amazonian force swarming, for a market-day, in overwhelming numbers from an endless chain of surrounding hamlets, provincial cities, and suburban towns. They spread themselves abroad, even as their rallying-place overspreads the land; for Boston was not built upon the elongated, narrow island of Manhattan, and here is no restricted line of march, into which all life is compressed, serving as mart and prom-

enade in one; like that of Fifth Avenue, let us say, from Thirtieth Street to Fifty-ninth Street, where no Amazon may escape inspection, however lovely or unlovely she may be. As for the emptiness of that first endeavor, do but take the trouble to look at upper Madison Avenue, or even upper Fifth Avenue along the Park on some fine day, and cease from troubling. There may be found far-trailing architectural splendors, all vacant, like our own.

Herein somewhere, it may be, lies the key to New York's insoluble enigma. We hope so. For men are men, whether Trojan or Tyrian, and love to look on comeliness. Try the Esplanade, next time, good Imperial explorer, on your eager way to the Limited Train!

To consider more feelingly, what are our dominant characteristics that have

been the idle sport of other cities? Those whereof we, ourselves, are partially conscious, those which the friend's sharp eye discerns? Puritan intolerance, of course; the historians dwell upon that, and we come by it naturally, if we happen to be neither Czechs nor Huns. Self-satisfaction, and, as some say, overweening pride of place and the before-mentioned engrossing interest in our own petty concerns, mingled with a tendency to "know it all," the world over. Longfellow notes in his journal for 1853 that the Bostonian commonly speaks "as if he were the Pope." Arrogance consequently, over-development of the critical faculty, and a sniffing *nil admirari* attitude, suddenly veering to feverish fanaticism in the embrace of strange religions. All storm-beaten, wandering barks of faith are sure of finding, at least temporary, refuge here.

A fondness for "causes" of all sorts, involving argument and wrangling among ourselves in their defence, or otherwise. Finally, high temper and tenacity which lead to private bickering and clannish feuds.

All this goes to the debit of the account; on the aggressive side, "these are our troubles, Mr. Wesley," which those "gi'en the giftie" affect to see in us. It may be a true bill; these failings are very human, and some among them we have heard of before in stars beside our own.

In other cases, perhaps, it were well to note in passing that only excess of the stated quality is deplorable. Taken in moderation, it might even slip over to the credit side of the account and rank among the virtues. Pride of place, for instance; for proper admiration of that we need not look into Sir Walter's "Min-

strel." Absorption in our own affairs, if it goes far enough, may make an unexpected appeal to the intelligent onlooker, and be hailed by him as public spirit. There was a question once concerning a bronze fountain for the court of our Public Library, — a question of fitness. On a certain Sunday noon the court was thrown open, that all who would might consider, *in situ*, the effect of the group, which had been offered for the place by the Library architect, McKim. At the appointed hour an animated crowd assembled there, viewing the fountain from all points, discussing, praising, criticising. The scene was interesting, not only from the occasion but from the character of the assemblage, made up of all ranks, including some "great ones of the city." Unknown to the crowd, McKim, himself, with a companion, Saint-Gaudens, watched the pro-

ceedings from a small loop-hole under the eaves. When he came down, his first remark was, "I don't care whether they take it, or not. It is amazing to see in an American city so much genuine feeling upon an artistic problem! The fine thing about Boston is that when a matter of this sort comes up, it proves always to be a burning question." It is all very well to call that issue now a tempest in a tea-cup, but the habit of alertness in matters relatively unimportant is a good one to acquire, and does not, necessarily, mean closing the eyes upon the more vital ones.

The habit of laying down the law with an assumption of papal authority is a rasping, pedagogic annoyance, the natural foible of those who devote ardent thought to educational interests and facilities; and in these Boston has never been behindhand. Witness, the many sarcastic allu-

sions to the "Athens of America" and that worn-out caricature of the Boston infant, all spectacles and frontal protuberances, prattling glibly in the dead languages. To be twitted with our attainments is to have tribute paid to their manifestation. And man is never perfect. If he strives with "clear spirit" for high things, he cannot hope to escape altogether some "infirmity of noble mind" in the process. That is a minor consideration, at best. Let him consider his critics in reflective moments, and correct it, if he can.

As to affection for "causes," we strain a point, evidently, at times, to keep our minds wide open, believing it better to be in the van than in the rear. Somebody has to rush into the "imminent deadly breach"; and who so fit for that as your Athenian?

Without high temper and tenacity no

deed of worth was ever done; but over-indulgence in the insane root may bring results supremely ludicrous. There were two spirited citizens of the old school, who once, at a funeral, fought over the family portraits hanging upon the walls in the house of the departed. One found them ugly beyond belief; the other, a shade nearer in relationship, thought his words insulting, and said so; whereupon the first repeated them with emphasis. They grew red as turkey-cocks, and, walking up the path to the grave, while the dispute waxed high, were obliged to part company before they reached it. That is a typical Boston story. The two were old friends who had long worked together for the good of the State, which owes them much. The fit passed, of course, and they woke from its fury to laugh at themselves.

In dealing with the credit side of the long account, we need not go into particulars. In philanthropy, in medicine, in surgery, in scientific research, in encouragement of the arts, in readiness to share the national burden at the earliest moment, the record, such as it is, stands there upon the open page. Let us "give God thanks, and make no boast of it." Especially as those who take the lead have ever been leaders also in the modesty of their example. One citizen, for improvement of musical taste and knowledge, quietly gives us one of the foremost orchestras in the world, and maintains it for a generation. Another, when narrow-minded legislators refuse aid to our Museum of Fine Arts which has outgrown its resources, places unhesitatingly a fortune at its disposal. A third, by his munificence, makes the first three opera

seasons possible. How many, lacking gold to give, give golden time in place of it, serving week in, week out, upon tiresome commissions freely, seeking neither reward nor approval! SIC VOS NON VOBIS — SO YE LABOR NOT FOR YOURSELVES — might be writ large upon that credit page, if they would have it so. They see the work to do, and do it, simply, earnestly, without an afterthought. There, between the lines, is the soul of the city, which he who runs may read. It is our own fault if the souls we all possess do not rise up in honest emulation.

We may not hope by that means, or any other, ever wholly to escape the corruption of party politics. Every form of government has curses attached to it, and this is one of ours. There was once a year when our officials were discovered to be drinking, daily, "champagne in pitch-

ers" out of the city coffers, and we cured them of that extravagance. Evil times come and go, and they will come again. But forewarned is forearmed. To watch with open eyes is half the battle.

In days of old, "before the war," when the pioneers met in the Far West, it was deemed a good thing to "hail from Boston." They who did turned their thoughts eastward and compared notes about it, longingly. There are those to-day, not native here, who express the same longing with no such distant encounter for provocation. Here are some symptoms of "Spring Fever," as he calls it, from a volume of verse by Edward Sandford Martin: —

"I want to go to Boston! There 's something in
the air —
The breath of spring; some restless germ unnamed;
it 's everywhere —

. . . . . .

'Twixt you and me 't were sweet to put a temporary gap,
And go and sit awhile in Boston's calm commodious lap.

. . . . . .

"Oh, Boston, sweet are your delights, and though they may seem vain
To minds austere, my spirit craves the taste of them again.
Oh, heavenly town when one is tired! this good one may discern
In you that Heaven has not, since one may taste you, and return."

Pray observe, gentle reader, that it is the New Yorker, here, who speaks; and by that snap of the whip in his last line gives evidence that he is of those who find, when all is said and done, really, the best thing in Boston to be the train for New York. If we don't say that in New York of the Boston train, it is because we decided long ago that here, where our lot was cast, we want not only to go,

but to live. To be sure, we have New York to visit; and we want to go there often.

The show is over, the diorama has dissolved. So, *ave atque vale!* Boston is by no means "complete," *pace* Mr. Arnold Bennett, who, peering into one of our queer old graveyards, thought and wrote it was. "All times when old are good!" as we began by saying; and it will not be very long before we shall look back upon these that are passing as we write, to sigh for the days when Saint Paul's Church, with its unfinished pediment, had not yet been turned into a cathedral, and when the Boston Custom House was a mausoleum and not a campanile!

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